

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, for some time, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT), the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON), myself and a number of others, Congressmen from the Democrat side, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), our independent Congressman, have been working very hard to make sure that Americans do not pay any more for their pharmaceutical products than they do in other parts of the industrialized world.

One of the things we found out when we were doing our investigation was that some of the pharmaceutical products that are sold in Canada sell for one-seventh or one-eighth or one-tenth of what they sell for in the United States. Tamoxifen, for instance, which is one of the drugs of choice for a woman who has breast cancer, costs seven times as much in the United States as it does Canada. That just is not right. Americans should not pay a disproportionate amount of the costs of research and development for a pharmaceutical product or advertising or anything else as they do in other parts of the world.

Yet Americans are bearing an undue amount of the burden of producing these products. Toward that end, a number of us have been working to try to get that changed through reimportation of pharmaceutical products from Canada, from Germany, from Spain, from other industrialized nations so that Americans get the benefit of the lower prices. The prices of pharmaceuticals have been rising at about 15 percent a year and Americans simply cannot afford that tremendous amount of increase year after year after year. We have seniors that are going to pharmacies with prescriptions saying, how much is it? If it is too much, they say, well, maybe I'll be back tomorrow. Or maybe they buy half a prescription and they split it in two, and that is not sufficient for the problems that they face. So we have been working on this.

We now find that we have a lot of allies in the States around this country. Governor Blagojevich of Illinois, one of our former Democrat colleagues from the Congress, did some research and found out in the State of Illinois for State employees, the State would save \$91 million a year in Illinois alone if they went to a reimportation plan. Today, Mayor Bloomberg of New York, a Republican, has said that he is going to look into this to try to do it to save money because New York is strapped for cash. The Governor of Minnesota, a Republican, has said that he is going to do it, and it is going to save tens of millions of dollars for the State of Minnesota. The Governor of Iowa is working on it. The mayor of Springfield, Massachusetts.

Mayors in Vermont and across the country, Governors and mayors, are

starting to realize that they are strapped for cash and need money to run their governments for fire protection, education, safety and other causes; and they need that money. They either raise it through taxes or find ways to economize in their States and cities. They have found they can save tens of millions of dollars across this country in each city and State by buying pharmaceutical products from outside the United States, the very same products that we buy here, made by the same manufacturers. There is no difference. The only difference is Americans pay six or seven times or as much as 10 times more than they do in other countries. That is not right.

There is a groundswell of support to bring about positive change in the cost of pharmaceuticals across this Nation. It is a groundswell that is not going to stop.

I would like to say to my friends in the pharmaceutical industry, it is time to sit down and reason with Members of Congress to try to find a solution to this problem rather than have Americans having to import the same products you are selling here in the United States from other countries. It makes no sense for you to sell them to Canada and for us to have to reimport them in order to save the taxpayers, the people of this country, millions of dollars and save the Governors and mayors of the States and cities of this country millions and maybe even billions of dollars. We spend over \$200 billion a year for State and Federal employees for their pharmaceutical products, I understand; and it is estimated by experts we can save 30 percent, that is, \$60 billion a year could be saved if we had a fair pricing like they do in Canada, Spain, Germany, and elsewhere. That could pay for the Medicare prescription drug program that we have all been talking about.

We need to get with the program. The pharmaceutical industry needs to get with the program. We want them to make a profit. We want them to have money for research and development, and we want them to get their tax credits; but we do not want them to burden the American taxpayer with all of these expenses, and that is what is going to happen if we do not deal with this now.

I would just like to say once again, Mr. Speaker, if anybody in the pharmaceutical industry is listening, we want to work with you to solve this problem; but one way or another, Americans are going to get a fair price for their pharmaceutical products. If we have to fight for reimportation, we will do it that way; or we will deal with you to do it a better way.

THE ECONOMY'S TRUE VICTIMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to remind my col-

leagues of our most pressing domestic problem, the plight of our unemployed workers. I really should not have to offer this reminder to my colleagues. The recent newspaper headlines and the heart-wrenching stories from our unemployed constituents should be reminder enough. But it looks like this Chamber's leadership unfortunately needs to be reminded that the true victims of this recession are not corporations, but the millions of Americans who have lost their jobs over the last 3 years.

It is no secret that our manufacturing industry has been the hardest hit. Of the 3.2 million jobs lost over the past 3 years, 2.7 million of them were good-paying manufacturing jobs that provide a livable wage and sustain this country's middle class. These job losses were not the result of increased American productivity. They are the result of flawed American tax and trade policies that actually provide incentives for American companies to ship their jobs overseas. That is right, to ship these jobs overseas. In the name of free trade, we have forced our companies to compete against businesses in countries with no or little environmental standards and labor standards and that pay their workers low wages. And how do our companies react? They are forced to scour their books to find any and every cost to cut. They cannot disregard environmental regulations because that is the law. They cannot deny their American workers fair labor protections because that is the law. But what they can do is reduce labor costs by moving production to an overseas land without these worker or environmental protections.

Despite all that this country has sacrificed for free trade, the World Trade Organization, the WTO, has now ruled that this country's foreign sales corporation and extraterritorial income laws are illegal tax subsidies. Considering that these tax provisions were enacted specifically to help our manufacturing sector, this ruling comes at an extremely difficult time for the manufacturing and other export industries. With a staggering trade deficit that seems only to rise, the last thing our export industry needs is to be slapped with \$4 billion in sanctions from the WTO.

So the answer is clear. Congress must fix the problem to comply with international trade law. If only it were so easy. Our friends on the Committee on Ways and Means, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. CRANE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), have recognized the burden that a solution would place on our manufacturers who receive billions of dollars annually from these laws. They also recognize the tremendous impact that the manufacturing sector has on our country, that manufacturing has long been the engine of economic growth in this country. Not only does the manufacturing industry drive our gross domestic product, our GDP; it drives our job